

Message Text

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13
ACTION IO-13

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

AF-08 ARA-06 EA-07 EUR-12 NEA-10 /104 W

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R 110605Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5417

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT CE

SUBJECT: DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY AS CONFERENCE BEGINS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. PROMULGATION OF NEW SET OF EMERGENCY REGULATIONS OVER WEEKEND AND PRESENCE OF LARGE SECURITY FORCE IN COLOMBO HAS ENABLED GSL TO INAUGURATE NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE IN ATMOSPHERE OF POLITICAL AND LABOR TRANQUILITY. LAST WEEK'S TELECOMMUNICATIONS STRIKE WAS BROUGHT TO QUICK HALF BY THREAT OF IMPRISONMENT. OTHER UNIONS HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENTLY INTIMIDATED THAT THEY ARE LIKELY TO REMAIN QUIESCENT. PRIME MINISTER'S POLITICAL OPPONENTS HAVE APPARENTLY DECIDED THAT OPPORTUNITY TO EMBARRASS HER GOVERNMENT IS NOT WORTH INCURRING CONSEQUENCES OF HER WRATH. END SUMMARY.

2. SHORT STRIKE LAST WEEK BY TWO POSTAL UNIONS WHICH HAD THREATENED DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES DURING NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE WAS SUSPENDED OVER WEEKEND IN RESPONSE TO PROMULGATION OF TOUGH NEW EMERGENCY REGULATIONS. TITLED APPROPRIATELY EMERGENCY (MAINTENANCE OF SECURITY DURING THE NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT CONFERENCE) REGULATIONS, THEY PROHIBIT GOVERNMENT SERVANTS FROM OBSTRUCTING OR

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ADVERSELY AFFECTING CONFERENCE BY REFUSING TO PERFORM

THEIR DUTIES FROM AUGUST 10-30. IF REGULATIONS ARE TRANSGRESSED "GOVERNMENT MAY, NOTWITHSTANDING ANYTHING IN ANY OTHER WRITTEN LAW TO THE CONTRARY TAKE ALL SUCH STEPS AS MAY BE NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN ANY SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC."

3. THESE REGULATIONS QUICKLY INTIMIDATED TWO STRIKING UNIONS WHO SUSPENDED STRIKE TILL AFTER CONFERENCE WHEN THEIR LEVERAGE OVER GOVERNMENT WILL BE CONSIDERABLY REDUCED. OTHER POTENTIAL STRIKE-OF RAILWAY STATIONMASTERSA WAS RUMORED TO START THIS WEEK BUT WILL NO DOUBT ALSO BE ABANDONED FOR NOW.

4. POWERFUL OPPOSITION TROTSKYITE UNIONS HAVE NOT BEEN HEARD FROM. NOT MANY IN COLOMBO QUITE BELIEVED THEIR PROTESTATIONS OF WHOLE-HEARTED SUPPORT FOR MRS. BANDARANAIKE'S CONFERENCE BUT THEY TOO HAVE DECIDED NOT TO TAKE RISK OF ACTIVELY DEFYING HER. THEIR SEVEN-WEEK OLD LEVER BROTHERS STRIKE CONTINUES BUT IS PRIVATE-SECTOR AFFAIR, UNAFFECTED BY EMERGENCY REGULATIONS AND IRRELEVANT TO CONFERENCE.

5. OTHER POTENTIAL DISSIDENTS, SEPARATIST TAMILS, HAVE BEEN CHASTENED BY RECENT TRIAL, SUSPENDED FOR DURATION OF CONFERENCE (COLOMBO 2693). PRIME MINISTER HAS MADE PRO FORMA GESTURE TO TAMIL COMMUNITY BY HOLDING WHAT IS DESCRIBED AS "MINI-SUMMIT" AUGUST 10 WITH RECENTLY-FORMED MODERATE TAMIL GROUP; UNCONNECTED WITH MILITANT TAMIL UNITED LIBERATION FRONT (TULF). ONLY OBVIOUS TULF ANTI-GOVERNMENT GESTURE IS MAILING TO DELEGATES AND OTHERS, INCLUDING EMBASSY, OF SEPARATIST TRACT FROM EXPATRIATE CHARTER IN LONDON.
REED

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, EMERGENCY PLANNING
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976COLOMB02867
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760308-0754
From: COLOMBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760866/aaaacfce.tel
Line Count: 95
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION IO
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 MAY 2004 by buchant0>; APPROVED <08 SEP 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY AS CONFERENCE BEGINS
TAGS: PINT, CE
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006